Revolution or Negotiated Regime Change? Structural Dynamics in the Process of Democratization: the Case of South Korea in the 1980s

Kern, Thomas; Laux, Thomas

Historical Social Research
Historische Sozialforschung

Thomas Kern & Thomas Laux:

Revolution or Negotiated Regime Change? Structural Dynamics in the Process of Democratization. The Case of South Korea in the 1980s.

doi: 10.12759/hsr.43.2017.3.245-274

Published in:

Historical Social Research 42 (2017) 3

Cite as:

Thomas Kern, and Thomas Laux. 2017. Revolution or Negotiated Regime Change? Structural Dynamics in the Process of Democratization. The Case of South Korea in the 1980s. *Historical Social Research* 42 (3): 245-274. doi: 10.12759/hsr.42.2017.3.245-274.

Historical Social Research
Historische Sozialforschung

All articles published in this Special Issue:

Thomas Kern, Thomas Laux & Insa Pruisken
Critique and Social Change: An Introduction.
doi: 10.12759/hsr.42.2017.3.7-23

Frank Adloff & Larissa Pfaller
Critique *in statu nascendi*? The Reluctance towards Organ Donation.
doi: 10.12759/hsr.42.2017.3.24-40

Christine Schwarz
Going Underground: Merging Collaboration with Micro-Resistance.
doi: 10.12759/hsr.42.2017.3.41-61

Patrick Sachweh
Criticizing Inequality? How Ideals of Equality Do – and Do Not – Contribute to the De-Legitimation of Inequality in Contemporary Germany.
doi: 10.12759/hsr.42.2017.3.62-78

Rainer Diaz-Bone
Discourses, Conventions, and Critique – Perspectives of the Institutionalist Approach of the Economics of Convention.
doi: 10.12759/hsr.42.2017.3.79-96

Laura Centemeri
From Public Participation to Place-Based Resistance. Environmental Critique and Modes of Valuation in the Struggles against the Expansion of the Malpensa Airport.
doi: 10.12759/hsr.42.2017.3.97-122

Sascha Münnich
Outside Powers: The Moral Economy of Anti-Financial Movements 1870-1930 and Today.
doi: 10.12759/hsr.42.2017.3.123-146

Philip Wallmeier
Exit as Critique. Communes and Intentional Communities in the 1960s and Today.
doi: 10.12759/hsr.42.2017.3.147-171

Isabel Kusche
The Accusation of Clientelism: On the Interplay between Social Science, Mass Media, and Politics in the Critique of Irish Democracy.
doi: 10.12759/hsr.42.2017.3.172-195

Henrik Dosdall & Byron Z. Rom-Jensen
Letting Lehman Go: Critique, Social Change, and the Demise of Lehman Brothers.
doi: 10.12759/hsr.42.2017.3.196-217

Insa Pruisken
Institutional Logics and Critique in German Academic Science Studying the Merger of the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology.
doi: 10.12759/hsr.42.2017.3.218-244

Thomas Kern & Thomas Laux
Revolution or Negotiated Regime Change? Structural Dynamics in the Process of Democratization. The Case of South Korea in the 1980s.
doi: 10.12759/hsr.42.2017.3.245-274

Revolution or Negotiated Regime Change? Structural Dynamics in the Process of Democratization. The Case of South Korea in the 1980s

Thomas Kern & Thomas Laux [*]

Abstract: *»Revolution oder verhandelter Regimewechsel? Strukturelle Dynamiken im Demokratisierungsprozess. Der Fall Südkoreas in den 1980er-Jahren«.* This study examines the interaction between the pro-democratic movement and the authoritarian military regime of South Korea in the 1980s. Contemporary democracy research is dominated by two opposing theoretical views: Voluntarist approaches tend to conceive the transition from authoritarian rule to democracy as a negotiated process. Structural approaches view the transition to democracy more or less as an outcome of structural conditions, in particular the balance of power between incumbents and challengers of a regime. We consider both perspectives not as competing alternatives but rather as accounts of two different structural dynamics: In some stages of the democratization process, it is more appropriate to interpret the confrontation between pro-democratic challengers and power holders as a (structurally determined) non-cooperative game. In other situations, both sides may recognize that cooperation (and negotiation) leads to a better outcome than a pure strategy of confrontation. The analysis focusses on the interplay between the two structural dynamics on the empirical case of South Korea in the 1980s. A process tracing analysis highlights three critical junctures in which the democratization process shifted from sequences of non-cooperation to sequences of cooperation and back. On this basis, we develop an analytical process model that integrates the two (opposing) theoretical approaches on the temporal dimension.

Keywords: South Korea, Democratization, Process Tracing, Protest, Social Movements, Structural Dynamics, Critique.

1. Introduction

Pro-democratic mass movements voice by definition critique towards authoritarian regimes and therewith challenge their politics. The development of protest actions and the impact of such movements in authoritarian states are a

[*] Thomas Kern, Department of Sociology, University of Bamberg, Feldkirchenstraße 21, 96045 Bamberg, Germany; thomas.kern@uni-bamberg.de.
Thomas Laux, Department of Sociology, University of Bamberg, Feldkirchenstraße 21, 96045 Bamberg, Germany; thomas.laux@uni-bamberg.de.

Historical Social Research 42 (2017) 3, 245-274 | © GESIS
DOI: 10.12759/hsr.42.2017.3.245-274

topical research subject of the social sciences (Goodwin and Rojas 2015, 795; O'Brien 2015; Tilly and Wood 2009). These sometimes revolutionary movements often play a crucial role in transitions to democracy. Tilly (2007, 13) even claimed that a country's "degree of democracy" is largely determined by "the extent to which the state behaves in conformity to the expressed demands of its citizens".[1] It is an essential feature of pro-democratic movements that they seek to expand the degree to which citizens have institutional access to the process of political decision-making. More specifically, these movements voice claims for more (or better) representation, inclusion, equality, and the rule of law (Alexander 2006, 59). Their critique generally results from a discrepancy between their democratic ideals and their perception of the shortcomings of the current political regime. However, as this connection is not straightforward, the emergence of critique and its public performance as protest is usually connected to a compound process of meaning construction and the formation of collective identities (Kern 2008, 141-52; Melucci 1995; Polletta and Jasper 2001; Snow et al. 1986).[2]

The following analysis of the transition to democracy exemplified by South Korea in the 1980s is based on the so-called "contentious politics" approach (Aminzade et al. 2001; Tarrow 1999; Tilly 2008; Tilly and Tarrow 2007). Accordingly, social movements, revolutions, waves of strikes, ethnic or nationalist mobilizations, etc. consist of similar processes and mechanisms (Tarrow 2015, 86; Tilly and Wood 2009, 3). The study of contentious politics analyzes the interplay of "movements and institutional politics" (Tarrow 2015, 87) and identifies "the ways they combine, in what sequences they recur, and why different combinations and sequences starting from different initial conditions, produce varying effects on the large scale" (McAdam et al. 2001, 13). In this context, our study analyses how protest and critique led to the democratization of South Korea in the 1980s (Shin and Chang 2011; Kern 2005, 2009; Shin 2003; Choi 2000; Park 1996). We aim at identifying the "relational mechanisms" (Tarrow 2015, 87; McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2001) in the democratization process. By examining the context of public claim making and critique, we are seeking to contribute empirically and theoretically to research on democratic transitions, in particular the *structural dynamics of the democratization process* as well as to the study on the impact of social movements and their critique (Earl 2007, 508; Giugni 1999, XXIV; Kern 2008, 175; Tarrow 2015, 92;

[1] According to this definition of democracy, "a regime is democratic to the degree that political relations between the state and its citizens feature broad, equal, protected and mutually binding consultations" (Tilly 2007, 13-4).

[2] Thus, protest is defined as a "public action by a non-governmental actor who expresses criticism or dissent and articulates a societal or political demand" (Rucht and Neidhardt 1999, 68).

Dosdall and Rom-Jensen [2017] also analyze the impact of critique in this volume).

Over the past few decades, the discussion about democratic transitions has been dominated by two approaches (Mahoney and Snyder 1999): From an (ideal typical) voluntarist perspective "all transitions to democracy are negotiated" (Przeworski 1991, 80; Merkel 1996; Schmitter and O'Donnell 1986). Conclusions about different pathways of democratization are usually based on the comparative analysis of case studies. They highlight how pro- and anti-democratic forces realize a negotiated transition (the so-called "elite pact") to democracy. In contrast, structural approaches stress the conditions and "social requisites of democracy" (Lipset 1959). They maintain that socioeconomic modernization leads to a shift in the balance of power in favor of the lower classes in the long run (Boix 2011, 814). In this scenario, particularly the working class is regarded as a leading force of democratization (Collier and Collier 1991; Rüschemeyer et al. 1992; Tilly 2007, 162). There are no negotiations and no compromises between challengers or critics and power holders. The interplay between both camps is considered to be a zero-sum game: While the lower classes demand broader access to political power, the upper classes try to keep them out. The more the balance of power shifts toward the lower classes, the more desperate are the attempts of the ruling classes to defend their privileges. Consequently, the transition to democracy often comprises a more or less violent break with the past (Goodwin and Rojas 2015, 796-803; O'Brien 2015; Tilly 1999, 29).

Although both approaches provide important insights in the process of democratization, each suffers from a distinct bias: While structural approaches largely conceive of the transition to democracy as being determined by class power (and interests), voluntarist approaches regard the structural conditions only as an external constraint, "which actors may or may not encounter as they pursue their goals" (Mahoney and Snyder 1999, 5). Consequently, structural approaches are often criticized as "over-socialized" and voluntarist approaches as "under-socialized" (Wrong 1961). Against this backdrop, this article seeks to reconstruct the two perspectives on the democratization process not as competing alternatives explaining the same phenomena from different perspectives. We rather regard them as models for two different empirical settings: In some situations, it is more appropriate to capture the confrontation between challengers and power holders as a (structurally determined) non-cooperative game where both opponents attempt to maximize their own payoffs. There are no direct talks or negotiations, just an exchange of blows between two rivaling camps. In other situations, both sides may recognize that cooperation (and negotiation) leads to a better outcome than a pure strategy of non-cooperation and confrontation. Therefore, none of the two approaches is superior. In empirical reality, the dynamics of contention are often determined by actors switching from cooperation to non-cooperation (and back). Instead of playing both

perspectives off against each other, it is possible to connect them on the *temporal* dimension. This will be illustrated in the following study by applying the method of "process-tracing" (Beach and Pedersen 2013) to the democratic transition in South Korea.

In 1987, South Korea underwent successful democratization, which had been initiated by a pro-democratic movement and was completed with a negotiated democratic regime change (Kern 2005). Our analysis starts with a theoretical discussion about the relationship between "structural dynamics" and "social mechanisms" (section 2). After that, we will discuss the concept of revolutionary situations (section 3). In section 4, we provide a concise introduction to the basic principles and ideas of the method of process tracing. Section 5 offers a detailed historical account of the interplay between power holders and pro-democratic challengers in South Korea in the 1980s. In section 6, we will identify the relevant mechanisms of this process in order to integrate the voluntarist and the structural approaches on the temporal dimension. Section 7 concludes with a discussion about the relationship between structural conditions and the autonomy of individual (and collective) actions in the context of democratization research.

2. Structural Dynamics of Cooperation and Non-Cooperation

The term "structural dynamics" refers to the fundamental patterns of interaction between social actors within a given institutional context (Schimank 2000, 17). The theoretical interpretation and empirical reconstruction of social processes such as the transition from authoritarian regime to democracy usually depends on the identification of underlying structural dynamics (Schimank 2000, 196-205). However, there are "open" and "closed" structural dynamics. Open structural dynamics comprise all (more or less) accidental circumstances, actions, and motivations leading to a specific historical event. In general, we can only re-narrate the chronological order of their occurrence if we want to understand their structural effects (Tarrow 2012). The storming of the Bastille during the French Revolution provides an instructive example. It also illustrates how open structural dynamics shape the singularity of important historical events (Sewell 1996).

The case of "closed" structural dynamics is different. A well-known example is the arms race during the cold war: Military build-up on one side caused military build-up on the other side. The causal chains of this process were *not* running independently side by side until they accidentally met each other at a certain point in time. They rather depended on a continual interplay of causal effects: Actions on one side were a direct response to actions on the other side. As soon as this type of "circular causality" (Schimank 2000, 201) develops, we are able to extract the *social mechanism* behind it. The aim, then, is to discover

social mechanisms "as delimited sorts of events that change relations among specified sets of elements in identical or closely similar ways over a variety of situations" (McAdam et al. 2001, 25). In the social sciences, theoretical progress generally depends on the extent to which the analysis of empirical social processes leads to the identification of closed structural dynamics and the extraction of social mechanisms (Mayntz 2004, 252). However, since all social phenomena partially consist of open *and* closed structural dynamics side by side, the quality of sociological studies usually relies on both: theoretical models (from social mechanisms) and "thick" historical accounts (Geertz 1973; Sewell 1999).

According to Scharpf (1997), there are basically two different types of "closed" structural dynamics: non-cooperation and cooperation.[3] In the case of *non-cooperative behaviour*, actors use their resources in order to influence each other. There is no direct communication. Accordingly, the course of interaction depends on the distribution of resources between them (Emerson 1962; Schimank 2000): (a) In an asymmetric constellation, the dominant actor enforces his will without taking the intentions of other actors into consideration. Consequently, the structural outcomes of his or her behavior are largely a product of his or her interests.[4] This fact is not only true for individual, but also for collective actors. For example, the developmental policy of the Japanese colonial government in Korea (1910-1945) was largely tailored to Japan's economic and military interests. Most Koreans barely managed to survive, and they had almost no political or economic resources available to counter Japanese hegemony. (b) The more the asymmetry of power and influence between the participants decreases, the more unpredictable are the results of their interaction, and the higher is the probability that the structural dynamics of interaction lead to an outcome which has not been intended by the participants. A well-known example is the so-called "royal mechanism" (*Königsmechanismus*) which Elias (1976; see also: Mayntz 2004, 251-2) uses to explain the rise of a centralized state in France. He shows how, in a situation of relatively blind competition between feudal rulers in the late Middle Ages, increasing pressures for territorial expansion finally resulted in the concentration of power in a single hand.

In contrast, *cooperative games* are characterized by actors seeking an agreement that complies with the interests of all of them. In this case, the par-

[3] Scharpf mentions "mutual adjustment" as a third type of structural dynamics. Mutual adjustment can "be used as a model for explaining stable social outcomes in the absence of explicit coordination by agreement or binding decision" (Scharpf 1997, 109). It is helpful to understand and explain all kinds of "collective behaviour" (Coleman 1990) such as contagious beliefs, escape panics, fads and fashions, etc. As these processes are not further relevant for this study, we decided to skip the discussion of "mutual adjustment."

[4] Schimank (2000, 274) stresses that there are also many examples of norms that have been unintentionally created by dominant actors.

ticipants expect a compromise (as a possible outcome of negotiations) to be more beneficial for them than a non-agreement. However, negotiations are often faced with a dilemma:

> The successful joint search for better overall solutions requires creativity, effective communication, and mutual trust, whereas success in distributive battles depends on the strategic, and even opportunistic, communication, withholding of information – and a good deal of distrust against potential misinformation. (Scharpf 1997, 124)

Under these circumstances, the development and the outcome of a cooperative game largely depend on the definition of the situation, the preferences, and the resources of the actors and their reciprocal moves (Dixit and Nalebuff 1997; Przeworski 1991; Scharpf 1997).

In the field of democratization research, it appears that voluntarist approaches describe the transition to democracy as a purely cooperative game. They regard the regime change as a contingent process of negotiation between pro- and anti-democratic forces. Focusing on the cognitions, preferences, and choices of political elites, they describe how political opponents come to an agreement about a peaceful regime change, the so called "elite pact" (Cadena-Roa 2003; Schmitter and O'Donnell 1986, 37). In contrast, structural approaches consider the transition to democracy to be a product of a non-cooperative game. The major causal determinant of social changes is "the distribution of power and the substance of power interests" (Rüschemeyer 1977, 8). No negotiations or pacts exist between them. Both opposing camps act unilaterally and use all available means to defend or conquer control over the state: "It is power relations that most importantly determine whether democracy can emerge, stabilize, and then maintain itself even in the face of adverse conditions" (Rüschemeyer et al. 1992, 5).

3. Revolutionary Situations

The basic setting described by structuralist approaches in the field of democratization research can be regarded as a "revolutionary situation" (Tilly 1978) where two distinct collective entities oppose each other within a society. It begins when a "government previously under the control of a single, sovereign polity becomes the object of effective, competing mutually exclusive claims on the part of two or more distinct policies. It ends when a single sovereign polity regains control over the government" (Tilly 1978, 191). This situation is characterized by three features: (1) Two competing coalitions asserting sovereignty over a territory and its population. (2) Each coalition is supported by a large part of the population. (3) The power holders are unwilling or unable to consistently repress the opposing coalition and their critique.

What are the conditions for the rise of a revolutionary situation? A comprehensive answer to this question would exceed the scope of this article. However, the definition of revolutionary situations implies three different factors: (a) all factors contributing to the development of opposing interests among social elites. In particular, increasing social mobility through socio-economic modernization is often regarded as an important cause for such divisions (Goldstone 1991; Moore 1969; Tilly 2007, 76). As the participant coalitions often consist of groups with particular – and sometimes even opposing – interests, the process of coalition formation is critical for the emergence of a revolutionary situation. (b) All factors supporting the growth of a broad constituency in the population that sympathizes with the challengers and their critique. In this context, Goldstone (1998, 140) introduces the concept of "cultural resonance" which refers to the framing of problems and solutions by the members of a coalition (Snow and Benford 1988, 1992, 2000; Snow et al. 1986). (c) All factors contributing to the reduction of the state's repressive capacities such as wars, natural disasters, economic crises, and international pressure. Another source of the state's weakness is the inappropriate or wrong interpretation of the current political situation which may cause the power holders to implement a counter-productive policy (from their perspective). Excessive repression may have ambiguous effects by both fostering the escalation of the situation and further delegitimizing the political regime (Celestino and Gleditsch 2013, 390; O'Brien 2015, 1223).[5]

The classical theory of social movements regards these conditions as part of the political opportunity structure (POS) (Eisinger 1973). Tarrow defines the POS as "consistent – but not necessarily formal or permanent – dimensions of the political environment that provide incentives for people to undertake collective action by affecting their expectations of success and failure" (Tarrow 1994, 85). In addition, Kurzman (1996, 165) showed that not only the objective opportunities are relevant for mobilization but also their subjective perception. In other words, protest movements do not articulate their critique and choose their goals, strategies, and tactics in a social vacuum. They are instead embedded in a political context that positively or negatively affects their mobilization efforts:

> The usual story of political opportunity goes basically in one direction – from opportunity to action. Political opportunity increases, whether by external or internal factors that weaken the state, or by changing social conditions that increase the resources and confidence of popular groups seeking change, or some combination of both. This leads some groups to take overt actions challenging the state; the latter responds with some mix of concessions and repression, trying to roll back the political opportunity. But the state's weakness or rising popular strength sustain the movement, and taking advantage of increased political opportunities, the movement succeeds. […] As opportunity

[5] The cost of repression for the political regime even increases when the protest is nonviolent (Celestino and Gleditsch 2013, 390).

> expands, actions mount; as opportunities contract, action recedes. (Goldstone and Tilly 2001, 180)

However, the rise of critique and protest in revolutionary situations does not depend solely on opportunities: Several studies demonstrated that activists sometimes ignore the costs of repression (McAdam 1986; Opp 1994). At short notice, the number of protests may decline in the wake of repression, but in the long run, it might possibly rise because, for example, the cultural resonance of the challengers and their critique is high and a growing number of citizens perceive the repression of the movement as illegitimate (Goldstone and Tilly 2001; O'Brien 2015, 1223; Opp and Ruehl 1990). In other words, the deterrent effect of repression can be compensated for by rising support from the population. Likewise, the effect of repressive measures can also turn out to be too weak (Kurzman 1996). This leads to the conclusion that the POS model "overlooks the pattern of tactical moves and countermoves" (Rasler 1996, 149) between challengers and power holders. If we conceptualize the classical POS model as a single dimension where increased repression reduces opportunity, it is inconsistent with the empirical findings. Therefore, Goldstone and Tilly stressed that "threat" (i.e., the risks and costs of collective action) is analytically distinct from "opportunity" (i.e., the chances of success): "The way that threat and opportunity combine, rather than shifts in the chances of success or the costs of action alone, will shape decisions regarding action" (Goldstone and Tilly 2001, 183). However, while opportunity is strongly related to general structural and distributional features of the social environment, the risks and costs of collective action are substantially under the control of the state:

> The state can increase prospective and current harms by increasing taxes, increasing violence against the population or specific groups, taking away rights and property or other such actions. The state can also decrease current and prospective harm by making concessions, that is changing its policies to improve conditions for popular and/or elite groups. In addition the state can choose to respond to protest action with varying levels of repression. (Goldstone and Tilly 2001, 185)

Consequently, the repertoire of the state mainly consists of two components: concessions and repressions (of protest). By choosing a mix of both, the power holders exert a strong influence on the outcome of collective contentious action. Therefore, most studies stress that revolutionary situations produced by expanding opportunities do not necessarily lead to revolutions. We only talk about a revolution when a ruling coalition is replaced by its competitors after a series of violent confrontations. But this is not always the case. Besides a revolution, at least two alternative outcomes are conceivable: (1) If the power holders fail to dissolute the challenging coalition with consistent repression, they often attempt to divide the opposing camp with concessions so as to regain control over the situation (Tilly 1999, 39). If they succeed, the challengers are defeated. (2) If it is not possible to divide the challengers, the power holders

may initiate direct negotiations to look for a compromise which is acceptable for both opponents. In this case, both camps have to give up some of their claims. Accordingly, the government's strategy is an important variable in the struggle for democracy.

Against this background, we can describe the interplay between challengers and power holders as a "brinkmanship game" (Schelling 1980) (see Table 1). The situation is as follows: The challenging pro-democratic coalition launches mass mobilizations and protest in order to overthrow the ruling authoritarian regime. In contrast, the power holders try to prevent this with a mix of repressions and concessions. In this constellation, structural dynamics of the transition to democracy depends on the effectiveness of the countermeasures taken by the regime (threat) and the cultural resonance of the challengers (opportunity). One characteristic of a brinkmanship game is that none of the participants knows when the situation gets out of control. The only way to stop an escalation without losing face is to seek for a compromise (Dixit and Nalebuff 1997, 209-10). But the two opposing camps will only participate in negotiations if they believe that the expected outcome is better than the result of non-cooperation and unilateral action.

Table 1: Possible Outcomes of the Confrontation between Challengers and Incumbents

		REGIME	
		Retreat	**Threat**
PRO-DEMOCRATIC CHALLENGERS	**Retreat**	**Field A** Negotiated Regime Change (3,3)	**Field B** Stable Authoritarian State (2,4)
	Threat	**Field C** Revolution[6] (4,2)	**Field D** State Collapse[7] (1,1)

Source: Own elaboration (strategies: 4 = best, 3 = second best, 2 = third best, 1 = worst).

Four analytically distinct paths of confrontation are thus conceivable: According to the structuralist approach, the outcome of the confrontation is completely determined by the distribution of power between both camps. They both refuse to cooperate until either the challengers overthrow the regime by means of a

[6] As mentioned above, a revolutionary outcome is defined as "the displacement of one set of members of the policy by another set" (Tilly 1978, 193).

[7] In this case, the state loses its monopoly on the legitimate use of physical force. This often includes a loss of social stability and a high level of violence.

revolution (Table 1, field C) or they fail and the state of repression prevails (Table 1, field B). In the case of a revolution, the regime is not capable of stopping the protestors. Conversely, the risk of suffocating the protest movement increases to the degree that the protestors move to the brink of a full-scale violent crack-down. For example, the regime could declare martial law and arrest or even kill all dissidents. Hence, both camps play a dangerous game with the risk of great losses for both opponents. In the worst-case scenario, the confrontation leads to a state collapse and long term civil war with unknown outcome (Table 1, field D). However, in many cases the participants switch from non-cooperation to cooperation to find a negotiated solution (Table 1, field A). In this case, the unilateral use of power is strongly restricted. The outcome of the negotiations is best described with the voluntarist approach. It mainly depends on the cognitions, interests, and strategies of the participating actors. If they fail, they move back to the path of non-cooperation.

Structuralist and voluntarist approaches both suggest that only one of the paths is possible. However, there is overwhelming evidence that the transition to democracy includes elements from both sides: sequences of popular contention and sequences of negotiation (Geddes 1999). Instead of understanding the relationship between the structuralist and voluntarist approaches as mutually exclusive, it appears to be more appropriate to regard them as theoretical generalizations of two *empirical* settings with different power relations. In some sequences of the transition process, actors may adopt a non-cooperative strategy where both camps pursue a maximization of their payoffs on the basis of unilateral action. In other sequences, actors may recognize that negotiations could lead to a better outcome than a pure strategy of confrontation. From this point of view, the main question is why and how actors switch from non-cooperation to cooperation (and vice versa).

4. Process Tracing

This study applies the method of process tracing in order to analyze the democratic transition in South Korea in the 1980s.[8] Process tracing is defined "as the analysis of evidence on processes, sequences, and conjunctures of events within a case for the purposes of either developing or testing hypothesis about causal mechanisms that might causally explain the case" (Bennett and Checkel 2015, 7). We have chosen process tracing as a method because it allows us to study causal inferences on the basis of the reconstruction of a single case (Beach and Pedersen 2013, 77; Goertz and Mahoney 2012, 10). In the 1980s,

[8] Pruisken (2017, in this volume) also applies process tracing for studying the interplay of critique and social change.

South Korea underwent a successful transition to democracy. However this process never followed a linear pattern (as, for example, classical modernization theory would imply). On the one hand, the structural dynamics of the confrontation between pro-democratic challengers and the power holders of the authoritarian regime were shaped by several changeovers between cooperation and non-cooperation. This makes South Korea an illustrative example for the analysis of the social mechanisms (in terms of "closed" structural dynamics) having led to a negotiated democratic regime change (Beach and Pedersen 2013, 154).[9] On the other hand, we are also interested in the more "open" structural dynamics of the democratization process. We see the turning points between the different stages of cooperation and non-cooperation as "critical junctures" in the sense of Collier and Collier (1991) who defined them as "periods of significant change, which typically occur in distinct ways in different countries (or other units of analysis), and which are hypothesized to produce distinct legacies" (Collier and Collier 1991, 29). Despite their distinct (historical) singularity, critical junctures are indispensable for a full explanatory account because they often change the course and link the different stages of relatively "closed" structural dynamics in the causal chain of events that led to the democratic transition in South Korea in 1987.

As a method, process tracing belongs to the "qualitative" paradigm in social sciences (Goertz and Mahoney 2012, 1), which is generally more interested in the "causes-of-effects" than in the "effects-of-causes" (Goertz and Mahoney 2012, 42; Mahoney and Goertz 2006, 229). The term "causes-of-effects" describes a research perspective that is primarily aimed at explaining the specific outcome of one or more (historical) constellations of necessary and/or sufficient conditions (Goertz and Mahoney 2012, 42).[10] Usually, an in-depth description and substantial case knowledge are necessary prerequisites for conducting a process tracing analysis (Collier 2011, 824). Based on such an in-depth case study, one may both explain the outcome of a single case and draw more general inferences about causal mechanisms. Hence, process tracing has been characterized as a form of "deterministic theorization" (Beach and Pedersen 2013, 13; Collier 2011, 823).

The purpose of studying causal mechanisms distinguishes process tracing from a case study that aims at simply explaining a single case in detail (cp. Hering and Schmidt 2014, 530). Beach and Pedersen (2013, 9-22) distinguish

[9] As explained in section 2, we follow McAdam at al. (2001, 25) in their definition of social mechanisms. Furthermore, we agree with Goertz and Mahoney's (2012, 100) definition of causality as "a generative process in which a cause yields an effect by triggering the operation of certain mechanisms and processes."

[10] In contrast to "causes-of-effects"-approaches, the "effects of causes"-approaches seek to analyze "the *average effects* of particular variables within population or samples" (Goertz and Mahoney 2012, 41, emphasis in original). "Effects-of-causes"-approaches are typical of quantitative methods.

three variants of process tracing: (1) "Theory-testing process-tracing" draws on existing theoretical knowledge to test empirically whether a certain mechanism can be observed (Beach and Pedersen 2013, 14). (2) "Explaining-outcome process-tracing" aims solely at explaining a specific case with its outcome (Beach and Pedersen 2013, 18). (3) "Theory-building process-tracing" attempts to discover a social mechanism between two "observable manifestations" in the case. Basically, this variant seeks to "build a hypothesized theory" which outreaches the observed case (Beach and Pedersen 2013, 16).

In the following sections, we are mainly using the variant of theory-building process tracing by drawing on the theoretical models and assumptions which we presented in sections 2 and 3.[11] By focusing on the interaction between stages of non-cooperation and stages of cooperation, we intend to expand the explanatory power of existing structuralist and voluntarist theories that, each on its own account, provide only a limited perspective on the process of democratization. The next section gives an account of the relevant events and steps that caused the successful transition to democracy in South Korea. We distinguish three sequential episodes between 1980 and 1987. Our case description supplies the empirical material for discovering the "causal mechanism that works within a bounded context" (Beach and Pedersen 2013, 61). The focus is on changes in power relations and the strategic behavior of pro-democratic challengers and the incumbents of the authoritarian regime in the context of a revolutionary situation (Beach and Pedersen 2013, 17, 60).

5. The Transition to Democracy in South Korea

This section deals with the transition to democracy in South Korea. In this case, the democratization is a consequence of the protest by the pro-democratic movement and serves as an example for analyzing the impact of critique. The following account is a preliminary step for the analysis of the process of democratization in section 6.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the South Korean government repeatedly switched from cooperation to non-cooperation, and back. In October 1979, the assassination of President Park Chung-hee ended a long phase of unilateral action and non-cooperation between the military power holders and the pro-democratic opposition. After a short period of negotiations and political reforms, a new military regime was established under General Chun Doo-hwan in late 1979/1980. In the following two years, the political opposition had to face harsh repression. In 1982, the regime changed its policy and initiated a process

[11] Our study also fits with the "explaining-outcome process-tracing" as we provide an explanation of specific aspects of the democratic regime change in South Korea.

of reluctant liberalization. Over the next few years, the pro-democratic forces re-organized and increased their pressure on the government with protest campaigns demanding political reforms. In spring 1986, the government suddenly adopted a strategy of cooperation and offered negotiations to the dissidents. Then, in April 1987, the regime attempted to move back to the initial state of non-cooperation and repression. This decision caused a major public stir, increased the public resonance of the pro-democratic movement and finally led to a democratic regime change by the end of June after weeks of sustained mass protest. The following three sections do not only provide a detailed narrative account of this process, but also show that the structural dynamic of the transition to democracy largely corresponded to the logic of a brinkmanship game.

5.1 First Episode (1980–1986): Repression, Concessions, and Protests

After the adoption of the so-called Yushin constitution (1972), the authoritarian regime of President Park Chung-hee, who had ruled the country since a coup d'état in 1961, turned into a highly repressive dictatorship: democratic institutions were abolished, dissidents arrested, and protests suppressed. The Korean Secret Service (KCIA) and the police closely monitored almost every step not only of the trade unions and the opposition parties, but also of Christian and student dissident groups. Although dissident groups succeeded in organizing protest actions and demonstrations against the authoritarian regime from time to time, the number of protests remained on a comparatively low level.

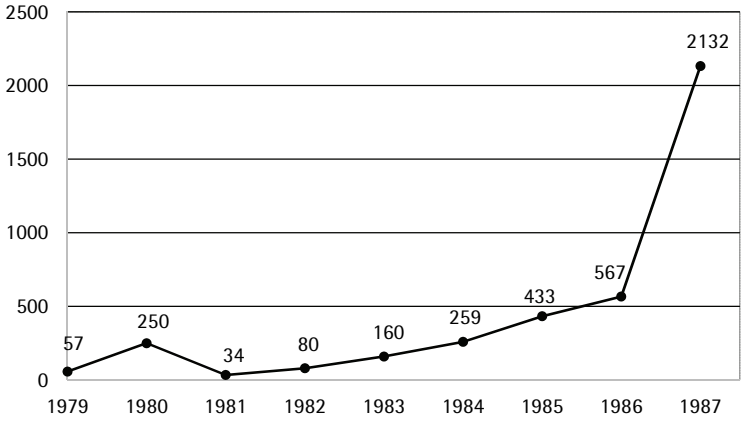
After President Park Chung-hee's assassination by a close associate in October 1979, the political situation of South Korea relaxed for a short time. The interim government initiated public discussions about democratic reforms, and the so-called "Seoul spring" began. However, leading circles of the Korean army disapproved of this development. Behind the scenes, a small group of military officers little by little occupied influential positions within the Korean security apparatus and delayed the progress of pro-democratic reforms. Over time, dissident groups began to respond to this development. In spring 1980, the country was flooded with a wave of mass protests (see Figure 1). The dissidents – mostly students and intellectuals – demanded an end of all delaying tactics and the lift of the martial law which had been declared immediately after the assassination of President Park. At first, the military refrained from repressive countermeasures. However, in May 1980 the military cracked down and brutally killed hundreds of protestors in the provincial capital of Gwangju. After this incident, General Chun Doo-hwan and his associates officially seized power and re-established the authoritarian regime. In the following months, almost all social institutions and organizations were cleansed. Thousands of dissident students, politicians, trade unionists, journalists, and clergymen were either arrested or banned from their profession (CISJD 1988). The mass media were put under state censorship. Dissident organizations were dissolved and the

universities were kept under close surveillance in order to prevent protest actions right from the start. Under these circumstances, the organization of protest rallies was practically impossible until the end of 1982. The pro-democratic movement was almost paralyzed.

At the beginning of 1983, the new military regime unexpectedly started a cautious process of liberalization (Kim 2000, 80-97). We do not know whether "fissures in the authoritarian power bloc" (Przeworski 1991, 56) were indeed responsible for the sudden change in the government's strategy. However, many studies suggest that a considerable number of regime members attempted to compensate for the weak legitimacy of the unpopular government with liberal reforms. Step by step, employment bans for dissidents were lifted and political prisoners released. In 1984, the government removed the police units from the universities which had been deployed by President Park in the 1970s in order to prevent student protests. The previously dissolved New Korea Democratic Party (NDP) was allowed to re-organize and re-emerged as leading opposition force during the parliamentary election in spring 1985. In the wake of this gradual opening of the system, the number of protest groups and activities slowly increased (Kim 2000, 83-7). The Council for the Promotion of Democracy (CPD), which included many leading Korean dissidents such as the later Presidents Kim Dae-jung and Kim Young-sam, was at the centre of this new protest network. The popular support for the pro-democratic movement rapidly increased and gave the government no chance to turn itself into a "broadened dictatorship" (Przeworski 1991, 62). Particularly the student movement became a leading force of resistance against the military regime.

The annual development of protests between 1979 and 1987 (see Figure 1) roughly corresponds to the expectations of the above mentioned classical POS model (Tarrow 1994; Eisinger 1973). During the "Seoul spring" following the assassination of President Park in 1979, dissident groups refrained from protests at first in order to support the policy of liberalization. A return to dictatorship appeared to be impossible. However, as the window of opportunities slowly closed, dissident groups responded to the anti-democratic rollback with sustained critique and mass protests. After the military coup d'état in May 1980, the protest movement was massively suppressed by the new power holders. The network of the democracy movement was dissolved and dissidents were completely excluded from public discourse. In this political climate, protests were almost impossible until the end of 1982. Along with the liberalization of the political system, protest activities dramatically increased from year to year (see Figure 1). In June 1987, the pro-democratic movement finally succeeded with a campaign of sustained mass protests and forced the military regime to participate in negotiations about a democratic regime change.

Figure 1: Number of Protest Events in South Korea (1979-1987)[12]



Source: Protest reports in the daily Korea Times, 1979-1987, six editions per week.

5.2 Second Episode (1986-1987): Negotiations

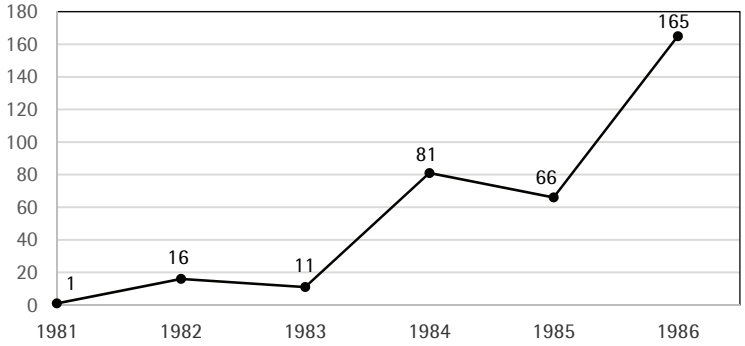
This section deals with the sudden and unexpected change from a strategy of non-cooperation to a strategy of cooperation by the government in 1986. In the early spring of that year, the prodemocratic coalition initiated a subscription campaign for a democratic reform of the constitution. The following weeks were characterized by a growing confrontation between protestors and police.

[12] As mentioned before, protests are defined as a "public action by a non-governmental actor who expresses criticism or dissent and articulates a societal or political demand" (Rucht and Neidhardt 1999, 68). Protest actions of single individuals (for example: suicides) were also included in the sample, because the authoritarian government was extremely sensitive to any form of opposition. The collection of protest data focused on the daily *Korea Times*, which is published in English. The *Korea Times* is a medium with nationwide distribution. It was established in 1950 by a Korean newspaper company that also publishes *Hankook Ilbo* in Korean. Although the reports contained therein did not differ significantly from the leading competitor, the daily *Korea Herald*, we opted for *Korea Times*, because this medium tended to be more attentive to Korean domestic politics. The effects of political censorship were difficult to assess. A comparison of the collected protest data and official police statistics (on an annual basis – other police statistics are not available) shows that the *Korea Times* reported on average about 75 percent fewer protest events than those reported by the police between 1979 and 1987. In other words, a considerable number of protest events were not included in official statistics. Nevertheless, the relative distribution of protests is nearly the same in both sources (Kern 2005, 103-4). Although the data provides no reliable information concerning the extent of protest activities in absolute numbers, it does permit reliable statements about proportions, correlations, and tendencies. For the purpose of this study, this limitation was viewed as acceptable.

On April 30, the government finally conceded and agreed to negotiate with the oppositional Korea Democratic Party (KDP) about a new democratic constitution. At this "critical juncture" (Collier and Collier 1991, 29), the structural dynamic shifted from unilateral action to negotiation. By doing so, the government appeared to have prevented a further escalation of the situation.

Why did the regime suddenly change its strategy? The answer is most probably related to the subscription campaign: Despite strong countermeasures – house searches, arrests, torture, house arrests, etc. – the government had not succeeded in stopping the process of mobilization. The campaign mobilized not only the "usual suspects" such as opposition politicians, students, religious dissidents, etc. This time, an increasing number of university professors took side with the protestors. Even disciplinary measures could not prevent hundreds of university professors publishing declarations against the government and demanding a democratic revision of the constitution.13 By doing so, they deployed their high social prestige in favor of the pro-democratic movement and moved the confrontation onto a new level. Professors usually exert a great influence on public life of the South Korean society. The military regime remembered very well that the authoritarian rule of former President Rhee Syngman had been terminated after the professors had joined the protests of the Korean student movement in 1960.

Figure 2: Protest Events between January and April (1981-1986)



Source: Reports of the daily *Korea Times*, 1979-1987, six editions per week.

The power holders must have also been concerned about a comparatively strong increase in the number of the protests (see Figure 2). In previous years, the peak of the protests was usually reached around the anniversary of the demonstrations in the provincial capital of Gwangju (May 1980), which had

[13] As a punishment, the professors were later excluded from access to research funds (cf. *The Korea Times*, August 1, 1986).

been brutally crushed down by the military regime. Usually, the time before May was comparatively quiet. However, in 1986 the protests had increased by about 2.5 times between January and April (see Figure 2). The fact that the number of protests was usually exceeded many times in May must have been perceived as a serious threat to the government. Against this backdrop, it appears that the Chun administration finally conceded and agreed to negotiate with the representatives of the pro-democratic camp in order to mitigate the tensions in the run-up to the imminent May protests.

This measure bought some time for the military government. For the time being, the escalation of the protest campaign was stopped. In contrast to the expected eruption, the number of May protests remained on a similar level as in the previous year.[14] In the following months, this pattern continued: From May to December 1986, the number of protests increased only moderately by about 10 percent from 367 (1985) to 402 (1986). Compared with the growth rates of previous years, this rise was relatively weak. At the same time, the concessions lowered the pace of the protest movement and provided the government with a strategic advantage. Compared with formal organizations or small groups, the collective bargaining capacity of protest coalitions is generally weak (Scharpf 1997). By agreeing to negotiations, the protestors had to select their representatives for the negotiations. As the regime approved only members of the parliamentary opposition as negotiating partners, the protestors were faced with a dilemma: (a) Leading representatives of the political opposition such as Kim Dae-jung and Kim Young-sam were excluded from the negotiations because they were still banned from political activities. (b) The protest movement was divided in different factions according to their regional identities. Some groups even questioned the collective goals of the negotiations. In the following months, the government attempted to benefit from these divisions and to deepen them.

This strategy appeared to work. In early May 1986, radical and moderate wings of the pro-democratic movement violently clashed in the harbour city of Incheon. Students and workers denied access for ordinary members of the oppositional NPD to a party convention. The social revolutionary wing of the movement was strictly against negotiations with the military regime and demanded to continue with the confrontational strategy. The regime regarded the unrests in Incheon as a welcome occasion to label the pro-democratic movement as a violent mob and to initiate a wave of arrests against allegedly "radical" leaders.[15] Many dissidents claimed that the unrests in Incheon were intentionally set-up and organized by the police.

[14] *The Korea Times*, all editions in spring 1986.

[15] From May to August 1986, about 169 members of so-called "radical" student organizations such as "Minmintu" and "Chamintu" were arrested. 154 students were sued, among them 63

After the government had agreed to negotiations, public attention shifted to the leaders of the pro-democratic movement – Kim Dae-jung and Kim Young-sam – who were officially excluded from the negotiations. Both demanded the release of all political prisoners as a precondition for direct talks. Consultations about this issue took several weeks and produced no concrete results. As a consequence, the establishment of a negotiating committee about a constitutional reform was postponed to September 30. Right from the start, the military regime played for time: The more the negotiations advanced towards the next presidential election (in December 1987) and the Seoul 1988 Summer Olympics, the better were the prospects for maintaining the status quo. In the long term, the power holders favored a smooth transition from dictatorship to a parliamentary system. In contrast, the pro-democratic opposition demanded a constitution with a strong President. As both camps held on to their position, the talks were deadlocked from the first day. Frequently, the time available for discussion was consumed by wrangling over procedural questions.

The ruling regime mainly resisted against a presidential system because it feared that Kim Dae-jung – the popular leader of the pro-democratic coalition – might run for office. In order to overcome the deadlock, leaders of the pro-democratic movement, in particular Catholic cardinal Stephen Kim Su-hwan, prompted Kim Dae-jung to abandon his political ambitions if the military regime agreed with the main demands of the movement. Yet the deadlock prevailed. While the negotiators talked, students violently clashed with the police in the streets and at the universities. The power holders seized every opportunity to crack down on dissident organizations in order to weaken political opposition.

In November 1986, the pro-democratic coalition began to prepare a mass rally in Seoul in order to increase pressure on the government. But the military regime remained adamant: Ahead of the demonstration many dissidents were detained and both Kims (Kim Dae-jung and Kim Young-sam) were placed under house arrest. About 70,000 policemen were mobilized in order to prevent the mass rally. Many protestors violently clashed with the police. According to newspaper reports, about 2,000 people were arrested. The dissident camp concluded from this incident that the regime was not serious about implementing a democratic constitution. They decided to follow the example of the government and to use a mixed strategy of negotiation and protest. Representatives of the oppositional NDP declared:

> With a belief that the violent regime, discarded by the people, will surely collapse, we now declare that the situation compels us to take on a new course of struggling in addition to the dialogue and compromise we have been pursuing so far. (*The Korea Times*, December 2, 1986)

---

on charge of violations of the "National Security Law" (NSL) (*The Korea Times*, August 31, 1986).

All available means inside and outside parliament should be used to realize a democratic regime change:

> We believe that a firm solidarity among all democratic forces is indispensable to end the military dictatorship. We are resolved to step up an alliance with democratic forces outside the party. (*The Korea Times*, December 2, 1986)

By the end of year, the protest coalition suffered a further blow. Due to the political ban on Kim Dae-jung and Kim Young-sam, the oppositional NDP was divided between an "official" leadership without power and the "unofficial" leadership of the two Kims who pulled the strings in the background. In December 1986, the official party leader publicly accepted the implementation of a parliamentary system without the consent of the two Kims. In return for broad guarantees concerning basic liberties and human rights he gave up the demand for a presidential system. The government immediately responded with euphoric approval, the pro-democratic coalition with utter rejection and outrage. Following a fierce internal power struggle, the NDP was divided. In spring, a new reform party was established under the unofficial leadership of the two Kims. The negotiations about a democratic reform of the constitution continued to be deadlocked.

As the leaders of the pro-democratic movement were well aware that time was on the side of the military regime, they increased their protest activities and strengthened the work of the non-parliamentary opposition. In January 1987, the situation suddenly changed when newspapers reported that a student activist of the Seoul National University had been tortured to death by policemen. This incident caused a stir. The power holders attempted to defuse the situation by offering amnesty for all political prisoners and the abolishment of the unpopular on-campus military training for male students. At the same time, demonstrations and public mourning ceremonies were rigorously banned. The government mobilized about 33,000 policemen in order to prevent a mass rally in Seoul on February 7. On March 3, about 60,000 policemen were necessary to prevent a funeral procession for the brutally murdered student activist. In both cases the military regime was successful. Nevertheless, some moderate voices from the ruling bloc began to demand further concessions in order to overcome the stalemate and to revive the deadlocked negotiations.[16] However, most other voices still suggested postponing the negotiations after the Seoul 1988 Summer Olympics.

[16] *The Korea Times* (March 5, 1987).

5.3 Third Episode (1987): From Protest to Negotiated Regime Change

The more time went by and the closer the Seoul 1988 Summer Olympics approached, the more hectically actors attempted to overcome the deadlock. In March 1987, the oppositional NDP demanded a meeting between President Chun and the two Kims in order to find a trilateral solution. But the government rejected this proposal. Even the influential US State Department tried to mediate between the two sides. The US probably feared a revolutionary escalation and wished to prevent a second "Gwangju" where hundreds of citizens had been brutally killed by soldiers in May 1980. However, as the US proposal for a compromise largely corresponded to the ideas and interests of the government (the transition to a parliamentary system), the pro-democratic coalition responded reluctantly. By April, public discourse increasingly moved toward a postponement of the negotiations. In return for the pro-democratic coalition, commentators talked about minor democratic reforms. This development culminated at the point where the power holders once again changed their strategy and finally moved back from cooperation (or what had been left of it) to unilateral action: On April 13, President Chun Doo-hwan called off the negotiations about a constitutional reform and labeled the talks as counter-productive. He proposed to continue with the negotiations after the Seoul 1988 Summer Olympics.

President Chun Doo-hwan's public announcement suggested that he favored the hardliner's position in the ruling bloc. Once more, the interplay of power holders and challengers had arrived at a critical juncture: Brinkmanship games only work under conditions of uncertainty (see section 3). As long as both camps were negotiating about a regime change, the uncertainty of the outcome prevented the situation from getting out of control. Each group had reasons to believe that a possible compromise would comply at least with some of their major demands. Both attempted to get concessions from the other side by applying small (or larger) doses of repression and protest respectively. They vaguely anticipated the point of no return where everything gets out of control culminating in a revolution or a massive crackdown on the opposition. By following a strategy of controlled escalation both camps attempted to prove the credibility of their threat. Each side continually calculated how far it could go. Those who gave up first would fail not because of the other side's strength, but because of a lack of courage.[17]

By shifting back from cooperation to unilateral action, the regime provoked the rise of a large wave of sustained protests which finally culminated in an

[17] The point is not: "If you don't obey, you have to face the risk that I will choose this or that action." Instead it means: "If you don't obey, you have to face the risk that this or that will happen although we will both regret it later" (Dixit and Nalebuff 1997, 205).

almost revolutionary regime change. When the power holders announced the official end of the negotiations, they abandoned the brinkmanship strategy that had helped to paralyze the pro-democratic forces for about one year. Uncertainties were now replaced by certainties and possibilities by reality. As a consequence, the pro-democratic coalition had only two options left: surrender or revolution. Perhaps the ruling bloc was subject to the "misperceptions" described by Przeworski (1991, 66) as an important element of many regime changes. At least, the state agencies had several times succeeded in preventing mass rallies of dissident groups. Furthermore, the oppositional NDP was in a wearing state of self-destruction. Under these circumstances, the hardliners of the military regime had come to believe that they were in a strong position to break up negotiations and to possibly resume them after the Seoul 1988 Summer Olympics.

However, this calculation did not work out. Although the public announcement of President Chun Doo-hwan frustrated many activists, the pro-democratic coalition quickly recovered and made an attempt to mobilize the masses against the military regime. The risk of a military crackdown on the protestors and a possible declaration of martial law strongly depended on the attitude of the US government, which commanded large parts of the South Korean army. According to press reports, the US State Department had been surprised by President Chun's sudden retreat from the negotiations.[18] In May, the government responded to the rapid increase of violent demonstrations by putting on alert 140,000 policemen all over the country.[19] However, the US government appealed to President Chun to return to the path of dialogue and negotiation.

When the wave of protests finally peaked in June, US secretary of state George Shultz announced that his government opposed the imposition of martial law.[20] In a personal letter, US President Ronald Regan asked his South Korean counterpart not to "overreact" and to return to the negotiating table.[21] Although the military regime continued to spread hints and threats about a possible imposition of martial law, the decision was finally made. On June 24, Kim Dae-jung was released from house arrest after 78 days. On June 26, leading representatives of the Korean churches demanded President Chun to agree to a democratic revision of the constitution.[22] Finally, on June 29, Roh Tae-woo – former military general and designated follower of President Chun – conceded to all demands of the pro-democratic opposition in an eight-point public announcement. After swift negotiations both sides agreed to the introduction of

[18] *The Korea Times* (May 8, 1987).
[19] *The Korea Times* (May 15, 1987).
[20] Considerable parts of the South Korean army were under US command.
[21] *The Korea Times* (June 20, 1987).
[22] *The Korea Times* (June 26, 1987).

a presidential system. The new democratic constitution was confirmed by a national referendum. In December 1987, the process was finally concluded with a free election of the new President. Due to a deep division between the two Kims, General Roh Tae-woo won the Presidential election. He had been a leading member of the former military regime right from its start in 1980. However, he was the last military general in the presidential office. After he had finished his term, he was followed by opposition leader Kim Young-sam. Since then, the military has never again interfered in the political process.

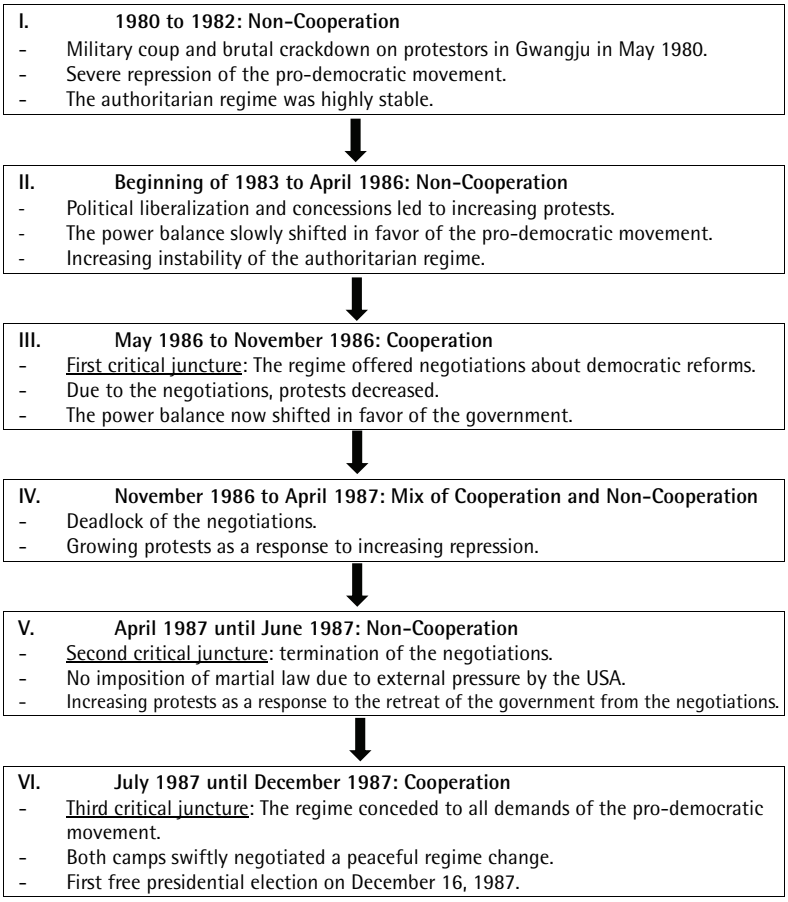
6. Analysis of the Democratization Process

Section 5 presented an in-depth analysis of the transition to democracy in South Korea, which concluded with a negotiated regime change in 1987. By tracing this process in detail, our analysis highlighted the causal sequences and events that finally led to democratization. In the following paragraphs, we seek to identify the most relevant mechanisms of this process and to integrate the voluntarist and structural approach of democratization research on the temporal dimension.

Figure 3 provides a summarizing overview of the critical junctures and sequences in the democratization process. As outlined in section 2, voluntarist approaches in the field of democratization research focus on the logic of cooperation, whereas structuralist approaches consider the transition to democracy to be a non-cooperative game. As a first approximation, we portrayed the confrontation between the pro-democratic movement and the authoritarian regime as a brinkmanship game with four possible outcomes (see Table 1). However, the brinkmanship game only provides a static model, which is incapable of adequately including the temporal dynamics of the process, in particular how both camps switched several times between non-cooperation and cooperation. The decision whether to negotiate or not depended on perceived structural changes in the balance of power between both camps. We reconstructed these changes with process tracing. Figure 3 illustrates that the "power relation" (Rüschemeyer et al. 1992) *and* the strategic behavior of the participant actors together determined the final outcome of the confrontation.

The strategy of unilateral action and non-cooperation was pursued by the ruling regime as long as it possessed the power to suppress the opposition (see Figure 3, I). In this stage, the authoritarian political system remained more or less stable. However, during the liberalization process from the beginning of 1983 to April 1986 (see Figure 3, II), the pro-democratic forces became increasingly stronger and the balance of power slowly shifted in their direction. The result was the first critical juncture of the process:

Figure 3: Sequences of the Process of Democratization

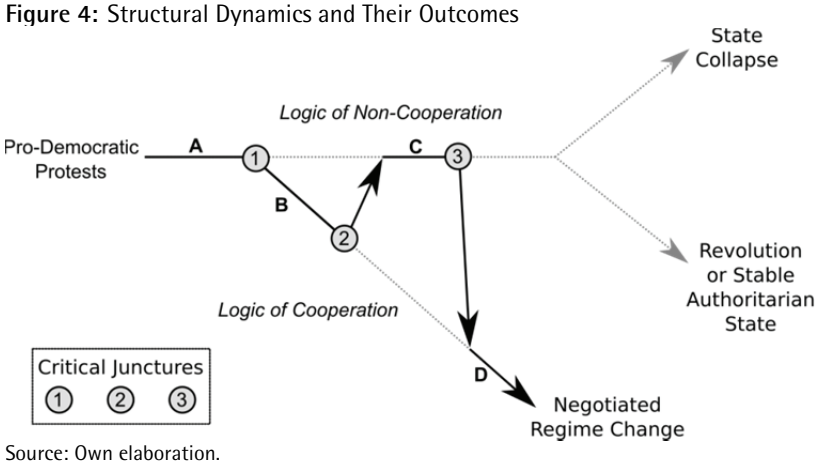


Source: Own elaboration.

The regime decided to ease the suppression of the opposition and agreed to take up negotiations (see Figure 3, III). The pro-democratic movement agreed and also adopted a strategy of cooperation. A major result of this change was a considerable decline in the number of protests during the second half of the year 1986. Consequently, the power relation shifted again, though this time in favor of the authoritarian regime. The ruling establishment subsequently reduced its cooperativeness in the negotiations and increased repression (see Figure 3, IV). The pro-democratic movement also increased its protest activities. Both camps pursued a mixed strategy of unilateral action and (controlled) escalation in order to improve their position at the negotiation table. In April

1987, the second critical juncture occurred, as the regime officially resigned from the negotiations (see Figure 3, V). The protest movement responded with a massive campaign. As the US-government opposed the imposition of martial law, the authoritarian regime was considerably constrained. Hence, the power relation shifted again, this time in favor of the pro-democratic movement. As a consequence, the regime accepted the conditions of the pro-democratic movement and returned to the negotiation table (see Figure 3, VI). This was the third critical juncture.

Figure 4: Structural Dynamics and Their Outcomes



Source: Own elaboration.

To summarize the results, Figure 4 illustrates the temporal dynamics of the democratization process and the different outcomes of the brinkmanship game (see Table 1). It also includes the three critical junctures presented in Figure 3. It suggests that stages **B** and **D** were characterized by the logic of cooperation, whereas the logic of non-cooperation dominates in stages **A** and **C**. The changes between the two logics were always caused by significant shifts in the perceived power relation between the two camps. As long as the balance of power was unequal, one camp (usually the incumbents of the authoritarian regime) dominated at the costs of the other camp (usually the pro-democratic movement). The result was a structural dynamic of non-cooperation. The more the difference of power between both camps decreased, the more difficult it was in particular for the regime to predict (and control) the outcome of the process. In this situation, the perceptions, strategies and intentions of individual and collective actors shifted to the center. The regime had only two opportunities: cracking down on the protest movement by imposing martial law – an approach rejected by the United States – or pursuing a path of cooperation. At least in the South Korean case, the protest movement was always willing to cooperate. It seems reasonable to assume that the final escalation of the protests in June

1987 was primarily the result of a misperception by the government that underestimated the pro-democratic movement's power.

Our reconstruction of the democratization process in South Korea provides crucial implications for the relationship between structuralist and voluntarist approaches. It mainly suggests that the autonomy of action depends to a great extent on (perceived) structural conditions and their dynamics. From this perspective, the two leading approaches in the field of democratization research appear in a new light: They are linked through (recurring) shifts in the perceived balance of power over time. The greater the differences in the power relation and the more confident at least one camp is that it will succeed, the more likely it is that the interaction between both camps is shaped by unilateral action and non-cooperation. In this case, the explanatory power of structuralist approaches is superior. However, if the participant actors conceive of their power relation as relatively balanced, the probability increases that they pursue a strategy of cooperation and negotiation. In this case, voluntarist approaches provide better explanations.

7. Conclusion and Outlook

Pro-democratic movements voice critique towards authoritarian regimes, which may serve as a starting point for democratization. By looking at the case of South Korea in the 1980s, we were analyzing the structural context in which protest and critique did lead to a negotiated regime change. One aim was to contribute to the question why the pro-democratic movement succeeded in overthrowing the authoritarian regime. The other aim was to analyze the impact of protest and critique in the process of a regime change.

The case of South Korea offers valuable insights into the dynamic interplay of conditions and the mechanisms of a negotiated democratic change. We combined voluntarist and structuralist approaches of democratization research on the temporal dimension to explain South Korea's path to democracy (see Figure 4). This temporal integration of the two approaches offers the possibility to capture the changes between the logic of cooperation and the logic of non-cooperation chosen by the power holders and the challengers. The relevant mechanism that explains the changes of the logics is the power relation between the power holders and the pro-democratic challengers. The contingency of the interaction depends on the structural conditions: As long as the balance of power is obviously unequal, the outcome of the interaction depends on the choices of the power holders. The more the difference of power decreases, the higher is then the probability that both sides consider cooperation.

This result entails some consequences for research on democratization. As the structural conditions for a successful transition to democracy continually change, the focus of research first needs to start with an analysis of the static

aspects of class structures, collective interests, and mobilization resources, and then shift the focus of analysis to the dynamic development of the confrontation that may lead to one or more shifts in the balance of power over time. In the next step, the interdependent choices and strategies of the participating actors have to be taken into account. On this basis, it may be possible to increase our understanding of the social mechanisms in the process of democratization further (McAdam et al. 2001, 264; Tilly 2000; 2007, 22-23). The result also contributes to the sociological analysis of critique and to the study of social movements' impact. It highlights that the social and structural context in which critique is voiced needs to be captured more thoroughly in order to evaluate its contingent impact on social change.

References

Alexander, Jeffrey C. 2006. *The civil sphere*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.

Aminzade, Ronald, Jack A. Goldstone, Doug McAdam, Elizabeth J. Perry, William H. Sewell, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly. 2001. *Silence and Voice in the Study of Contentious Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Beach, Derek, and Rasmus Brun Pedersen. 2013. *Process-Tracing Methods*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.

Bennett, Andrew, and Jeffrey T. Checkel. 2015. Process tracing: From philosophical roots to best practices. In *Process Tracing. From metaphor to analytical tool*, ed. Andrew Bennett and Jeffrey T. Checkel, 3-38. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Boix, Carles. 2011. Democracy, Development, and the International System. *American Political Science Review* 105: 809-28.

Cadena-Roa, Jorge. 2003. State Pacts, Elites, and Social Movements in Mexico's Transition to Democracy. In *States, Parties, and Social Movements*, ed. Jack A. Goldstone, 107-43. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Celestino, Mauricio Rivera, and Kristian Skrede Gleditsch. 2013. Fresh carnations or all thorn, no rose? Nonviolent campaigns and transitions in autocracies. *Journal of Peace Research* 50: 385-400.

Choi, Jang-Jip. 2000. Democratization, Civil Society, and the Civil Social Movement in Korea: The Significance of the Citizens' Alliance for the 2000. *Korea Journal* 40: 26-57.

CISJD (Christian Institute for the Study of Justice and Development). 1988. *Lost Victory. An Overview of the Korean People's Struggle for Democracy in 1987.* Seoul: Minjungsa.

Coleman, James S. 1990. *Foundations of Social Theory*. Cambridge, MA, London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Collier, David. 2011. Understanding Process Tracing. *PS: Political Science and Politics* 44: 823-30.

Collier, Ruth Berins, and David Collier. 1991. *Shaping the Political Arena. Critical Junctures, the Labor Movement, and Regime Dynamics in Latin America*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Dixit, Avinash K., and Barry J. Nalebuff. 1997. Spieltheorie für Einsteiger. Stuttgart: Schäffer Pöschel.
Dosdall, Henrik, and Byron Rom-Jensen. 2017. Letting Lehman Go. Critique, Social Change and the Demise of Lehman Brothers. *Historical Social Research* 42 (3): 196-217. doi: 10.12759/hsr.42.2017.3.196-217.
Earl, Jennifer. 2007. The cultural consequences of social movements. In *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*, ed. David A. Snow, Sarah A. Soule and Hanspeter Kriesi, 508-30. Malden, Oxford, Victoria: Blackwell Publishers.
Eisinger, Peter K. 1973. The Conditions of Protest Behaviour in American Cities. *The American Political Science Review* 67: 11-28.
Elias, Norbert. 1976. *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation. Wandlungen der Gesellschaft. Entwurf zu einer Theorie der Zivilisation*. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp.
Emerson, Richard M. 1962. Power-Dependence Relations. *American Sociological Review* 27: 31-41.
Geertz, Clifford. 1973. Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture. In *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays,* ed. Clifford Geertz, 3-30. New York: Basic Books.
Geddes, Barbara. 1999. What Do We Know About Democratization After Twenty Years? *Annual Review of Political Science* 2: 115-44.
Giugni, Marco. 1999. Introduction. How social movements matter: Past research, present problems, future developments. In *How social movements matter*, ed. Marco Giugni, Doug McAdam und Charles Tilly, XIII-XXXIII. Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press.
Goertz, Gary, and James Mahoney. 2012. *A Tale of Two Cultures*. Princeton, Oxford: Princeton University Press.
Goldstone, Jack A. 1991. An Analytical Framework. In *Revolutions of the Late Twentieth Century,* ed. Jack A. Goldstone, Ted Robert Gurr und Farrokh Moshiri, 37-51. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
Goldstone, Jack A. 1998. Social Movements or Revolutions? On the Evolution an Outcome of Collective Behavior. In *From Contention to Democracy*, ed. Marco Giugni, Doug McAdam and Charles Tilly, 125-45. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
Goldstone, Jack A., and Charles Tilly. 2001. Threat (and Opportunity): Popular Action and State Response in the Dynamics of Contentious Action. In *Silence and Voice in the Study of Contentious Politics,* ed. Ronald Aminzade, Jack A. Goldstone, Doug McAdam, Elizabeth J. Perry, William H. Sewell, Sidney Tarrow and Charles Tilly, 179-94. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Goodwin, Jeff, and Rene Rojas. 2015. Revolutions and Regime Change. In *The Oxford Handbook of Social Movements,* ed. Donatella Della Porta and Mario Diani, 793-804. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Hering, Linda, and Robert J. Schmidt. 2014. Einzelfallanalyse. In *Handbuch Methoden der empirischen Sozialforschung,* ed. Nina Baur and Jörg Blasius, 529-41. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag.
Kern, Thomas. 2005. *Südkoreas Pfad zur Demokratie. Modernisierung, Protest, Regimewechsel.* Frankfurt a.M., New York: Campus.

Kern, Thomas. 2007. Modernisierung und Demokratisierung: Das Erklärungspotenzial neuerer differenzierungstheoretischer Ansätze. *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* 59: 30-58.
Kern, Thomas. 2008. *Soziale Bewegungen. Ursachen, Wirkungen, Mechanismen.* Wiesbaden: VS Verlag.
Kern, Thomas. 2009. Cultural Performance and Political Regime Change. The Democratic Transition of South Korea in 1987. *Sociological Theory* 27: 291-316.
Kim, Sunhyuk. 2000. *The Politics of Democratization in Korea. The Role of Civil Society.* Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.
Kurzman, Charles C. 1996. Structural Opportunity and Perceived Opportunity in Social-Movement Theory: The Iranian Revolution of 1979. *American Sociological Review* 61: 153-70.
Lipset, Seymour Martin. 1959. Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Legitimacy. *The American Political Science Review* 53: 69-105.
Mahoney, James. 2000. Path Dependence in Historical Sociology. *Theory and Society* 29: 507-48.
Mahoney, James. 2001. Path-dependent explanations of regime change: Central America in comparative perspective. *Studies in Comparative International Development* 36: 111-41.
Mahoney, James, and Richard Snyder. 1999. Rethinking Agency and Structure in the Study of Regime Change. *Studies in Comparative International Development* 34: 3-32.
Mahoney, James, and Gary Goertz. 2006. A Tale of Two Cultures: Contrasting Quantitative and Qualitative Research. *Political Analysis* 14: 227-49.
Mayntz, Renate. 2004. Mechanisms in the Analysis of Social Macro-Phenomena. *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 34: 237-59.
McAdam, Doug. 1986. Recruitment to High-Risk Activism: The Case of Freedom Summer. *American Journal of Sociology* 92: 64-90.
McAdam, Doug, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly. 2001. *Dynamics of contention*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Melucci, Alberto. 1995. The process of collective identity. In *Social Movements and Culture*, ed. Bert Klandermans and Hank Johnston, 41-63. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
Merkel, Wolfgang. 1996. Struktur oder Akteur, System oder Handlung: Gibt es einen Königsweg in der sozialwissenschaftlichen Transformationsforschung? In *Systemwechsel 1. Theorien, Ansätze und Konzepte der Transformationsforschung*, ed. *Wolfgang Merkel*, 303-32. Opladen: Leske und Budrich.
Moore, Barrington. 1969. *Soziale Ursprünge von Diktatur und Demokratie*. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp.
O'Brien, Thomas. 2015. The primacy of political security: contentious politics and insecurity in the Tunisian revolution. *Democratization* 22: 1209-29.
Opp, Karl-Dieter. 1994. Repression and Revolutionary Action. *Rationality and Society* 6: 101-38.
Opp, Karl-Dieter, and Wolfgang Ruehl. 1990. Repression, Micromobilization and Political Protest. *Social Forces* 9: 521-47.
Park, Sunwoong. 1996. *Culture, Civil Society and Political Change: The Transition to Democracy in South Korea*. Los Angeles: University of California.
Polletta, Francesca, and James M. Jasper. 2001. Collective identity and social movements. *Annual Review of Sociology* 27: 283-305.

Pruisken, Insa. 2017. Institutional Logics and Critique in German Academic Science. Studying the Merger of the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology. *Historical Social Research* 42 (3): 218-44. doi: 10.12759/hsr.42.2017.3.218-244.
Przeworski, Adam. 1991. *Democracy and the Market. Political and Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Rasler, Karen. 1996. Concessions, Repression, and Political Protest in the Iranian Revolution. *American Sociological Review* 61: 132-52.
Rucht, Dieter, and Friedhelm Neidhardt. 1999. Methodological Issues in Collecting Protest Event Data. In *Acts of Dissent: New Developments in the Study of Protest,* ed. Dieter Rucht, Ruud Koopmans und Friedhelm Neidhardt, 65-89. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
Rüschemeyer, Dietrich. 1977. Structural Differentiation, Efficiency, and Power. *The American Journal of Sociology* 83: 1-25.
Rüschemeyer, Dietrich, Evelyne H. Stephens, and John D. Stephens. 1992. Capitalist Development and Democracy. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Scharpf, Fritz W. 1997. *Games Real Actors Play. Actor-centered Institutionalism in Policy Research.* Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
Schelling, Thomas. 1980. *The Strategy of Conflict*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
Schimank, Uwe. 2000. *Handeln und Strukturen. Einführung in die akteurtheoretische Soziologie*. Weinheim: Juventa.
Schmitter, Philippe C., and Guillermo A. O'Donnell. 1986. *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
Sewell, William H. 1996. Historical Events as Transformations of Structures: Inventing Revolution at the Bastille. *Theory and Society* 25: 841-81.
Sewell, William H. 1999. Three Temporalities: Toward an Eventful Sociology. In *The Historic Turn in the Human Sciences,* ed. Terrence J. McDonald, 245-80. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.
Shin, Jin-wook. 2003. *Die Gewalt und die Heiligkeit. Eine politisch-soziologische Studie zur Interaktionsdynamik von Modernisierung und Zivilgesellschaft in Südkorea 1960-1990*. PhD diss., Institute of Sociology, Free University Berlin.
Shin, Gi-wook, and Paul Chang, eds. 2011. *South Korean Social Movements: From Democracy to Civil Society*. New York: Routledge.
Snow, David A., Steven K. Worden, and Robert D. Benford. 1986. Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization and Movement Participation. *American Sociological Review* 51: 464-81.
Snow, David A., and Robert D. Benford. 1988. Ideology, Frame Resonance, and Participant Mobilization. In *International Social Movement Research: From Structure to Action,* ed. Bert Klandermans, Hanspeter Kriesi and Sidney Tarrow, 197-217. Greenwich: JAI Press.
Snow, David A., and Robert D. Benford. 1992. Master Frames and Cycles of Protest. In *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory,* ed. Aldon D. Morris, and Carol McClurg Mueller, 133-55. New Haven: Yale University Press.
Snow, David A., and Robert D. Benford. 2000. Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment. *Annual Review of Sociology* 26: 611-39.

Tarrow, Sidney. 1994. *Power in Movement. Social Movements, Collective Action and Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Tarrow, Sidney. 1999. Studying Contentious Politics: From Eventful History to Cycles of Collective Action. In *Acts of Dissident. New Developments in the Study of Protest*, ed. Dieter Rucht, Koopmans Ruud und Friedhelm Neidhardt, 33-64. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
Tarrow, Sidney. 2012. *Strangers at the Gate.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Tarrow, Sidney. 2015. Contentious Politics. In *The Oxford Handbook of Social Movements,* ed. Donatella Della Porta and Mario Diani, 86-107. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Tilly, Charles. 1978. *From Mobilization to Revolution*. Reading: Addison-Wesley.
Tilly, Charles. 1999. *Die europäischen Revolutionen*. München: C.H. Beck.
Tilly, Charles. 2000. Processes and Mechanisms of Democratization. *Sociological Theory* 18: 1-16.
Tilly, Charles. 2007. *Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Tilly, Charles. 2008. *Contentious Performances*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Tilly, Charles, and Sidney Tarrow. 2007. *Contentious Politics*. Boulder, CO, London: Paradigm Publishers.
Tilly, Charles, and Lesley J. Wood. 2009. *Social movements, 1768-2008*. Boulder, CO, London: Paradigm Publishers.
Wrong, Dennis H. 1961. The Oversocialized Conception of Man in Modern Sociology. *American Sociological Review* 26: 183-93.